

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

So, now you're organised and raring to go. Before you do anything else, just stop for a moment and think. Ask yourself the question above. What Do You Want? Have you really stopped to think, what sort of job, career or maybe change of direction you are **really** looking for?

You cannot, repeat **NOT**, afford to be passive in deciding what you want from your next career move. This is a **life-changing decision**, give it the thought such a decision deserves. Do not be tempted to think that by **not** knowing, you are showing flexibility, or that you will "know the right job when it comes along". I know it does work like that a lot of the time, but you are different. **It shouldn't work like that.** And, **by the end of this chapter, you will know why!**

If you go to interviews with such an attitude you will fail. Want to know why? O.K., I'll tell you. I speak to people who hire all day long, and the overwhelming consensus of opinion is that as soon as a candidate shows up without a clear sense of direction and purpose, the interviewer **loses interest**. They feel they are being used as career counsellors. Their response is simply, *"If the applicant has not bothered to take time to try and help themselves, why should I bother?"*.

You have to know what you want in advance, and possibly even more importantly, **why**. Yes, be up for the "challenge", the "opportunity", the "personal growth" etc, but you **must** pull these ideas together with some **concrete career goals** as well. If not, quite simply, you will have lost before you start, and you will alienate potential employers into the bargain.

So, how do you go about deciding what you want?

In the past it has been fair to say that the most realistic job target is one that relates closely to your current / last job. This probably still applies in the higher salary brackets. It is also true that the closer you go to your previous experience, the easier it will be to find a new job. However, the job markets of the 00's are showing some **major changes**, and these changes mean that **personal goals and attitudes are now much more relevant**.

One thing is for sure, the recession of the early 90's saw the end of the "job for life" scenario! However, I feel sure you will be pleased to know, it was not the recessions fault! There is a sea-change going on in the way business works. In the twenty years I have been finding people jobs I have seen *incredible change*.

The change was, and still is, being driven by technology. The new and emerging technologies mean that information exchange can now happen in a split second. For example, it takes a couple of minutes to send a fax to Australia, it takes seconds to E-Mail a friend in America. And, as sure as night follows day, business is getting sucked in further and further. The result? Business methods are being changed beyond all recognition, **and being changed for good!** And...the pace of change gets quicker.

Quite simply, that means job guidelines are being constantly blurred. Because industry needs to respond so quickly to change, the traditional job function is also being eroded. So, we do not see so many jobs nowadays, rather more a number of tasks or projects that are starting to replace the traditional job.

The main visible effect of this in the job hunting world is simply the fact that many more positions are now on a short term contract basis. For example in IT (that's Information Technology for the uninitiated, you know, computers), most major development projects are now staffed by a key compliment of permanent technical specialists and business orientated managers and then built by teams of temporary contractors.

You see, it suits all needs. Businesses get their projects completed quickly, to budget and do not have to make a number of computer programmers redundant at the end of it all. The contractors simply move on to another project at another company where their skills are needed. **Everybody wins!**

Now, this may have come as a bit of a shock to the system, but I can assure you that this is the way things are going. This isn't a negative on your job search, **on the contrary, armed with this information it is very much a positive.** Not a lot of people know this, as they say. More and more, you need to be prepared, and take this into account when you ask the question, what do I want?

Now, whilst I would **like to be able to give** a personal tutorial to each and every one of you, it is impossible in a book. *So now it's crunch time, you have to decide what you want!* The following section contains some prompts that will help you answer this vitally important question. So, here goes.

Before we go any further:-

WARNING - STOP HERE

GET A PEN AND PAPER - DO NOT READ ANOTHER WORD UNTIL YOU HAVE GOT THEM.

Well, go on, off you go. Do it now!!!!

Got your pen and paper? Good. Want to know why? Well, because as soon as you read some of the points and questions that follow, *ideas will pop into your head.* If you just carry on reading **they will be lost forever.** As something occurs to you, jot it down. Then at the end of the chapter, you will be able to formulate your ideas and notes into a **coherent set of job, or possibly even life, goals.** Remember what I said earlier about how **essential** knowing what your purpose is when going for a new job.... *Well here's where you find your purpose!* Are you sitting comfortably? Then we will begin.

The following points will help you to define what you want, and are grouped under the following headings:-

1. Desires or Needs
2. Skills or Abilities
3. Personality
4. Advantages or Assets

1. Desires or Needs

Most people, for the greater part of their lives find themselves up against both prejudice and negative input. It starts as a small child, "You do as I say, not as I do", "Why don't you think of others?", "That's really selfish." or even worse, "You stupid child" or "You're useless!". It's called parental training, frightening isn't it?

Then, of course, there is religious "training". Self denial, we are actually taught that our desires are selfish? Beats me. "You must think of others", "For the good of the church, community etc"

And, if that lot ain't enough, we go to school and the teachers all rush to have their twopeneth. "Armson, you're useless, you'll come to nothing", "Do your homework or you'll be a failure", "You'll never do anything with your life" etc, etc. Sound familiar? I am pleased to say that many schools are more enlightened nowadays, but rest assured it is a recent innovation!

Peer pressure. Now this is an interesting one! We all like to feel accepted as part of our peer group, and it's amazing how easy it becomes to bow to peer pressure. "You don't like **that** do you?" "Don't be a jerk, this is much better". "Well, I suppose so". Recognise it. How many times have we heard that one?

Finally, you reach the workplace, where most people simply suffer "the job". They live for the weekend or next years two weeks in Majorca! A recent survey (admittedly in the good old U. S of A) found that *less than 5%*, **yes, less than 5%** of people actually *enjoyed* their jobs! **Frightening**. Most people are so busy on the treadmill they forget to take time out to decide **what they want**. Sure, we have to make a living, but we must not lose sight of the fact that it *ought to be fun doing it!* Most people *don't even* spend the weekends doing what they want. They end up decorating, cleaning the car or shopping. **For you, it is time to change!**

The first question you need to ask is vital. The answer to this one will drive everything else you (want) to do!

A. What motivates you?

Profound isn't it? Sure as eggs are eggs, if you answer this one truthfully, and are prepared to accept the answer, you will not only change your job or career, but probably your whole life for the better.

Linked very much to this, and in a broader sense, with what motivates you in mind, now ask what do I really want? I mean *really* want, your most **deep seated desires**, not just wishes. You will find that these true desires will be very much in tune with what it is that really motivates you.

At this point I ought to distinguish between mere wishes and true desires. An example of a wish might be, "I wish I was ten years younger", or "I wish I could climb Everest for my 70th birthday". These are not fully integrated desires. They might make you feel good for a day or two, but they will not drive you on to **achievement** like a **true** desire or need will.

There is no secret with a desire, it is something *so strong that you will move heaven and earth to get it*. People with fully integrated desires work long hours, make huge sacrifices, they don't really care how others perceive them, **but**, they **WIN**. They do this because they believe passionately, they sell their case persuasively, make allies of key people, and they WIN.

So.....what *do* you want? Still a difficult question? O.K, let's make it a little bit easier.

Still got that pen and paper? Take the question (you should know it by now!) "**What Do You Want?**" and write down the first TWENTY answers you would give. This may take a little while to do, up to a couple of hours to come up with your final list.

Initially your answers will probably be all over the shop. " I want more time to myself", "I want a new BMW". Some wishes, some more realistic. Some may be idealistic, for example "I want to contribute something to the world". Now, take out all of the wishes and look at the items that are left. Ask yourself the following;-

1. What do the items left say or mean to you?
2. What do *you* mean by them? For example, if you say you want more money, *why? What for?* Is it a new car? a holiday? or a new house? Really

analyse what's the **real reason** you have written what you have. **Keep asking why?**

Really get inside each point and understand in as much detail as possible why you have come to that want. Play mind games with the answers, visualize situations you might find yourself in, have a bit of fun with the idea. Then write down what you see, what you feel. Once you have finished with point number one, go on to number two and do the same.

Once this course of action has been completed for all the points, leave the papers for a day or two **and DON'T even think about them again!**

Before you finish, have a quick look at the wishes. O.K, we all want to win the lottery, but in reality the odds are 14 million to one against, so the chances are, well, 14 million to one! So don't bank on it! Instead ask why you want more money? The answers will provide significant input into your desires. Let me explain, perhaps winning all that money would put an end to all those financial worries. You know, too much month at the end of the money. Maybe it's that dream you've held for the last five years to have a couple of weeks at Sandals. Maybe, you just need a break from the treadmill. If you look at your wishes in this light, you will gain significant insight into your reasons, and therefore benefit greatly when finalising your desires or needs.

Alright, enough on desires and needs for the time being. Soul searching question number two.....coming up.

B. Where Do You Want To Live?

You might come up with lots of answers, do the same as you did with desires and needs. Write them down and go through the process described above. This is critical in the job search. There is no point in going for a series of interviews in London if you *really* want to live in Scotland! You will **quickly** realise that you have made a wrong decision. If you feel you want to move, but find yourself unwilling (as is common), ask yourself why? What is stopping you? The answer in many cases is that people feel they have invested heavily in their property and are simply not willing to let that go. If where you are does not make you happy, **change your mindset**, and make a move to somewhere that does!

It will produce more happiness in your life and enhance your work performance.

However, without going through this process, you may not understand why it was the wrong choice. You may, therefore, make the fatal mistake of believing, for example, you have joined the wrong company, when it is *really working in London that you do not like*. If this happens, you are just as likely to get yet another job in London, and be unhappy yet again when the real answer is a new career in Edinburgh. If you do not analyse this question thoroughly you may **never** know the reason why!

Moving on, question number three looks into the future!

C. What Do I Want To Be Doing In Five Years Time?

Many people will say that you really need to be looking ten or even fifteen years into the future when looking at your career. **Sorry, anything over five years is crystal ball gazing!** I have already talked about the pace of change and the "job for life" being gone. Who could possibly have foreseen that fifteen years ago? Think about the power that is now in your desk top computer. Fifteen years ago that sort of power would have taken up the *entire computer* room of a major corporation! In the last two years the speed of information transmission has come down to a matter of nanoseconds. The pace of change is almost bewildering. Predicting more than five years hence is simply not a reliable science any more. This also applies to the job market!

So, think in terms of five years. Ask yourself the following questions.

1. What role will you be fulfilling?
2. What company will you be working for?
3. Imagine a "Day In The Life", what will it be like?
4. What will your personal life look like?
5. Who will your colleagues be?
6. What sort of remuneration will you be receiving?
7. Who will be your partner?
8. Where will you be living? (what sort of house?)
9. Where will you eat dinner?
10. What will you have achieved?

Once more capture your thoughts and ideas in the same manner, don't forget, we are looking to put together a plan for your future, with your continued development in the working environment as the key element.

Finally, question number four. You were only dealt this one hand, this life of yours is not, repeat, **IS NOT a trial run!** This is it, once you've lived it, that's it! There is no more. Time slips away (and then one day you find ten years have slipped behind you, no-one told you when to run, you missed the starting gun - Dark Side of the Moon, Pink Floyd). You only live each second once, once and it's gone.....forever. So, question number four, and think oh so very hard on this one;-

D. What Were YOU Meant To Do With This Precious Life Of Yours?

Heavy! Now that cuts right to the bone doesn't it? That question pulls *no punches* at all! This is it, **this is where you stand and face yourself.**

1. What is your destination?
2. What were you meant to be?
3. What were you supposed to accomplish during your lifetime?
4. What is the purpose of your life?

Same sketch, write down your thoughts, but not the "grand scheme of things" type answers. Personal answers that *mean something* to you. Answers that relate to what you want, where you want your career to go, both job and life.

A quick warning here. You are likely to look quite introspectively at this point. Try not to, this is not designed for you to sit in judgement on your past, you really **must** look to the future, and, you should certainly be looking for situations that make you happy!

In closing this section on desires and needs, you might ask what is the point to all this? Simply, it is to clarify your desires and needs in a way that you can understand them, and then, being able to understand them, to use that understanding as a launching pad for a new or enhanced career. Desire or need is the strongest motivating force I know. If you discover your *inner most desires*, **nothing** will stop you from attaining the highest job and career goals you could **possibly** imagine!

Of course, you can also use this method to achieve other great things in your personal life. The method is the same whatever the goal. With the focus you achieve, you will be able to move forward with the confidence that your desires and needs have created the necessary power within you to achieve what you want.

So, having now fully explored the possibilities as to what you might want, now let's look at Skills and Abilities.

2. Skills and Abilities

There is one very basic question here which dictates how you will "market" yourself in your job search, it is simply this:-

What Are You Good At?

Good question isn't it? Shame they didn't tell you at school, package it all up and set you off on a pre-destined career. I don't know about you, but I always felt someone else ought to be better placed to tell me what I am good at, or even what my true vocation in life should be. (Remember careers counselling at school, college or university?) In my younger years I just wanted it easy, someone to tell me everything I should do for an easy life.

Fat chance!! **That is definitely NOT the way it works if you want success.**

I was only ever good at things like Subbuteo or ten pin bowling, picking a top-ten hit or making wise cracks in class. I could never score the F.A Cup Final winner at Wembley or woo the class dolly bird, or, come to think about it, get anything above a "C". These things were **beyond** me!

However, as I went through school, college, my early working life, *I began to pick up good skills*. I learned to type reasonably well (please, no letters if you find a typo!), I learned good financial sense, good business skills, I learned to sell, completing the **biggest** deal in my company one year. I learned to get along with people, how to get the best from people and finally became one of the UK's most successful individuals in the recruitment business.

I also developed a unique sense of humour, learned how to motivate people, and developed a **highly positive attitude** (crucial, I believe). I also learned how to bring up three children (no-one prepares you for that one!), and how to live life to the full, to feel the spice of life, to feel joy at waking up in the morning.

Now, you're probably thinking Derek's blowing his own trumpet a bit here, well, yes I am, but it *does* illustrate the point I want to make. You see, along the way I have developed a **very useful set of skills**, skills that **would be of benefit to virtually any company in the country!**

Sometimes it was *hard*, but all of these skills, in certain circumstances, are **highly marketable**. *You have developed similar, maybe (probably?) better skills*. I know there were some kids in your class at school who could run the 100 in 10.5 seconds in the third year. Who were on trials for Manchester United at thirteen. Who could play guitar like Clapton at fourteen. Who were natural mathematicians. Who always got the girl! (or boy).

The natural wheeler-dealers. These individuals all had **rare** (and I mean rare) talent. But, if truth be told, *they were the exception*, the rest of us had to gradually build up our **unique** portfolio of skills and abilities, **sometimes by damn hard work and persistence** (admiral qualities by the way). **These skills are your passport to success**; don't let anyone tell you any different.

I started working life in banking, mainly due to parental pressure (there we go again). I **hated** it from the minute I walked through the door, but it was a good career, with prospects and a *job for life!* However, after three short years I was pigeon-holed - BANKER!!

So, deciding to "get out", I sat down to write my CV. That said BANKER too.

I went to recruitment agencies, and all they could say was, "Oh, I see you're in BANKING, haven't got any BANKING vacancies at the moment".

The mistake I made was simply to show what I had done (BANKING if you hadn't guessed yet!) and **not the skills and abilities I had gained**. Skills and abilities *that could easily have allowed me to make a career change*. I had started to develop the skills I mentioned earlier, I was already good at getting people to see my point of view, explaining things well (you had to in the Bank). I had good communications and letter writing skills, I was good with money and budgets and was genuinely hard working. All skills that industry, at the time, was begging for.

However, all anyone could see was **BANKING**, and I hated it!

I had made the cardinal sin of not showing these highly marketable skills in my CV. Now I look at it, I realise these skills were the root of all the good things I did (and still do). Once I realised the mistake and put these skills into my CV, I **doubled** my salary overnight, and, nine months later **achieved my goal of a move into sales with a major blue chip company**.

Amazing, isn't it?

Incidentally, I hope you don't mind me using myself as a case study. I do it simply because it is the case I know best, and it does illustrate the point I am making *extremely* well. The point is this;-

Know how important it is to understand your skills and abilities (you may hear them called key competencies nowadays by the way).

It cost me dear, **don't let the same happen to you!** You can do these things and do them very well, they are things you *do not need qualifications* for, and things that many people find difficult. You can also *get paid very well* for these skills, particularly if you **market** them well.

So, the message? Well, know your skills, know what you want, and then be **creative** in marketing those skills to **ensure** you do get what you want. Decide what your key competencies are. Think about what you have accomplished and how. What skills did you use and how? What did you accomplish in school? The local whatever club? Your hobby? Past jobs? What about family accomplishments? Then ask what do I know that helped me achieve these things, and remember these are *not necessarily* "formal" skills.

As an example, try not to think of understanding the Widget & Co ISO9002 Quality Manual down to the last word, but also think in terms of how you are able to understand, make sense of and impart knowledge to others in really complicated issues.

Try not to think of yourself as only a computer programmer, but think in terms of being able to explain the use of complex technology to business people you work with as well.

Don't just market your total knowledge of Lichensteinian tax laws (although very handy), but also think in terms of how you are easily able to decipher complex rules and regulations so that others may easily understand.

I hope you see the distinction, because it is so important when you come to market yourself, *particularly* if you are looking to **change direction in your career**.

Incidentally, don't think I am telling you to leave your detailed knowledge out of your CV. If you think that, you have not grasped what I am saying. You need to market your specialist knowledge, but you also need to market the other competencies those skills have allowed you to develop. You have to "mix and match" your approach depending on the job you are applying for.

O.K, moving on, time to look at your personality.

3. Personality

Ooooh, touchy! Well, not really, not when we are looking at things from a career perspective anyway. The questions here are quite interesting, and starting to look at things from a slightly different angle.

What type of person are you?

**In what kinds of situations are you most productive?
fulfilled?
satisfied?**

From these answers you will be putting another major piece of the puzzle into place as far as helping you decide in which job role / career you would be truly happy.

The recruitment industry has a nasty habit of pigeon-holing people. Remember I told you about being a BANKER. I don't suppose you can blame the recruitment industry because companies do like people to have "done the job before", and it does make it easier for recruitment consultants to "place" candidates. Just as an aside here, recruitment consultants are not good at finding a change of career direction for you. This is not their fault; it is because people do get "type-cast". Not just by their job title or function, but also by their personality as well. You've heard it, "Oh, he **really** is the banking type". What is the banking type? - Search me. You hear it said about any profession or job role you care to think of, particular favourites are;-

- * Doctors
- * Lawyers
- * Teachers (particularly Art and English)
- * Scientists
- * Accountants
- * And of course, yes....BANKERS!

Having worked in a bank for a while, I met bankers of all **possible** personality types. I met friendly sorts, cold bankers (you know the sort who make you feel like a criminal for a £2.34 overdraft *and then charges you £35 for the letter to tell you!*), flamboyant bankers, quiet bankers and noisy ones. In fact, all sorts. I therefore submit, this being the case in any industry or occupation, that this pigeon-holing is a load of old clap-trap! There, I'll get off my soap box now.

From the above it follows that all personality types have their place in any given working environment. **However, it is true to say that certain personality traits (and their implications) are better suited to certain job requirements.**

So, once again there are a number of questions that you can ask yourself in order to help ascertain **what your personality strengths are**, and how they fit into the job scenario.

Still got the pen and paper? Good, keep making the notes, because here goes with the next set of questions;-

1. Do you learn better when left alone to digest information, or in conversation with others?
2. Do you understand things more quickly from listening, watching or from written explanations?
3. Would you rather do something on a trial and error basis, or by using and following detailed instructions?
4. Do you see the "big picture" or do you have to learn by steps?
5. Do you pick up things more quickly by on the job training or in a training course situation?
6. Do you find you often get flashes of inspiration when exposed to new information, or do you need to study such information in a methodical manner?
7. Do you follow the normal method of doing things rigidly or do you stamp your own personality on the solution?

You can also learn a lot about your personality and temperament if you ask yourself the following;-

8. What was the last new subject you learned about? (In depth, by the way).
9. What circumstances surrounded the learning?
10. How did you learn?
11. Why did you learn?

The last two questions here are of **major significance**. The answer to "How" will provide insight into your **best learning methods**, and the answer to "Why" will reveal your **motivations**.

Just a thought by the way. Please do not think I am trying to tell you that you **must** go out and learn everything you can. If you think I am telling you to go and learn quantum mechanics or something, you have missed the point. The point is simply this, everyone *needs to be constantly learning*. It is part of life's rich pattern, the minute you *decide* to stop learning **you start to die, mentally**. The process of learning is what makes us better, more experienced human beings. It is not only good for you, it also **increases your earning power!**

Here are some other personality factors you need to take into account when assessing a potential new job.

1. Do you work better on your own, or do you need the support of a team?
2. Do you need to be given strict guidelines to work to, or do you perform better when given a broader set of goals to aim at?
3. Do you like to solve complex issues, or are you better once the solution has been worked out?

4. Do you like to control situations or do you prefer to be led?

5. What type of setting do you prefer (city / urban, indoor / outdoor, open plan / closed office etc)?

Having fully thought through the answers to the above and accepted the answers into your planning, you now need to do the following;-

1. Decide what knowledge and skills you need to move towards your job / career goal with confidence.

2. Ensure you fully understand your personality and in what environments you best respond.

Easy, isn't it?

So, to the final part of the jig-saw that will define what you are looking for. The three areas discussed so far will certainly give you a highly focused and successful job search campaign. However, what I am going to give you now will **power charge** your campaign to ensure you achieve **incredible advantages** over other candidates. The next area we are going to look at is the advantages you have over the competition.

4. Advantages

This section should maybe have been titled "assets". If you stop to think about it, actual assets ie; money, equity, investment plans can easily be assets in your job search. How? As an example, let's say you decide (having put all the foregoing into practice) to hold out for the *perfect opportunity*. Actual assets (money for example!) can be used to not only fund your search but also yourself and your family during the search. It is a **total** release of pressure to know that you do not need to work for twelve months! That you have time to secure the job or career change that really is **exactly what you want**.

If you are nearing the end of your working life, it may be that such assets can release you into less remunerative work that is personally more appealing or hobby orientated.

However, your main advantages are not of a literal sense. The investments in learning skills throughout your life, now become advantages in your job search. Examples of such advantages are as follows;-

- * A reputation as one of the best in your market. (You have made **one hell of an investment** to be recognised by your peers as one of your market's best!).
- * A degree or other educational assets.
- * A particular market / topic specialisation.
- * A hobby.
- * A network of contacts.

These advantages are very difficult to discuss here, because they will be very *personal* to you, but you get the idea. To illustrate how this might work in practice, let's take an example.

Say, you studied, and got a first in French at university. After leaving university you join a major investment bank in the City of London and end up on the floor trading derivatives.

A highly plausible situation. After a number of years with the bank, your French is only used on the occasional holiday, and has faded a little.

Then one Sunday, you are reading the paper, and there, in the recruitment section, is a **high powered job** as a derivatives specialist, paying a **mega** salary with a French bank. Hey presto, suddenly your French degree is a **major advantage**. I hope you are starting to see what I mean by advantages and assets.

Other examples, an old holiday job selling on the market could turn out to be an asset, that children's summer camp you did in 1994 might just turn to your advantage one day, maybe even that stint you did as treasurer of the pub football team might just come in handy. *You never know when these skills and experiences might suddenly become an advantage.* It is difficult to imagine right now, but really, you never know.

These advantages you have, are like playing two's wild, you **never know** when a particular feature might suddenly become an asset.

This also illustrates a further point. Like actual assets (investments etc), you should always be looking to **add** to your portfolio, as well as **investing further** in existing assets. Remember what I said about learning earlier, it will **always pay dividends**. Indeed, the *more* you invest, as in literal assets, the *more you will reap the dividend*. It is the same with your personal assets.

You should **always** aim to have some sort of learning or asset investment project on the go!

So, that covers the four areas that you need to address when deciding what you want. Once you have completed this assessment, you will know where you want to go as far as your career is concerned. You may well have re-defined some major areas of your life as well! With the pace of change getting faster, it is **vitaly important that you understand how you can make the best of any given situation**, how you will react, how you can take advantage.

What you should now have is a complete profile of yourself, basically what makes you tick. What motivates you, what excites you, what new areas you can move into and generally how to **maximise** your potential as far as the career / job situation is concerned.

As a final thought in this chapter, we Brits are very conservative when it comes to career changes, we are known to stay in one career stream for life. Now we have already discussed why that will no longer be possible, but it is interesting to note that Americans expect to change career track (on average) five times during their working life.

In the U.K we are going *to have to get used to that sort of batting average*, and following the guidelines in this chapter is one *sure* way of making certain you are **ready to meet the challenge**. In the end, you have to know what you want. Then you have to make a compelling case to a potential employer by using your **Desires or Needs, Skills and Abilities, Personality and Advantages or Assets**. In other words, sell yourself, and don't forget to close the deal!